

Application Number 10/047,373

Reply to Final Office Action of May 14, 2004

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Final Office Action dated May 14, 2004. Applicants have amended claims 8, 13, 14, 17, and 25 and canceled claims 10 and 24. Claims 8, 9, 11-17, 20-23, 25 and 26 are now pending.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 8-10, 13-17, 20, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki et al. (US 5,015,430) in view of Iida et al. (US 5,009,929). The Examiner indicated that claims 11, 12 and 23 are allowable in their present form, and objected to claims 24-26 as including subject matter that would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In this amendment, Applicants have amended claim 8 to include the limitations of claim 11, which the Examiner indicated to be allowable. The scope of claim 8, however, is different from that of claim 11, and therefore no double patenting concerns should exist. Claim 9 depends on claim 8. Independent claim 8 and dependent claim 9 should now be in condition for allowance.

Applicants have also amended claims 13 and 14 to depend on allowed claim 11. Claims 15 and 16 depend on claim 14. Accordingly, dependent claims 13-16 should now be in condition for allowance.

Applicants have also amended independent claim 17 to include the limitations formerly recited in claim 24, which the Examiner indicated as being allowable if rewritten into independent form. Independent claim 17 and the respective dependent claims 20-22, 25 and 26 are now in condition for allowance.

The current amendments raise no new issues, as the limitations added to the independent claims have all been previously considered by the Examiner. Accordingly, the current amendments should not require any further search by the Examiner. The current amendments place this application in condition for immediate allowance. Entry of the amendments is courteously solicited.

All claims in this application are now in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments, reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims.

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Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to deposit account number 09-0069.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the below-signed attorney to discuss this application.

Date:

6/15/4

Imation Legal Affairs
P.O. Box 64898
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0898
Telephone: (651) 704-3604
Facsimile: (651) 704-5951

By:



Name: Eric D. Levinson
Reg. No.: 35,814